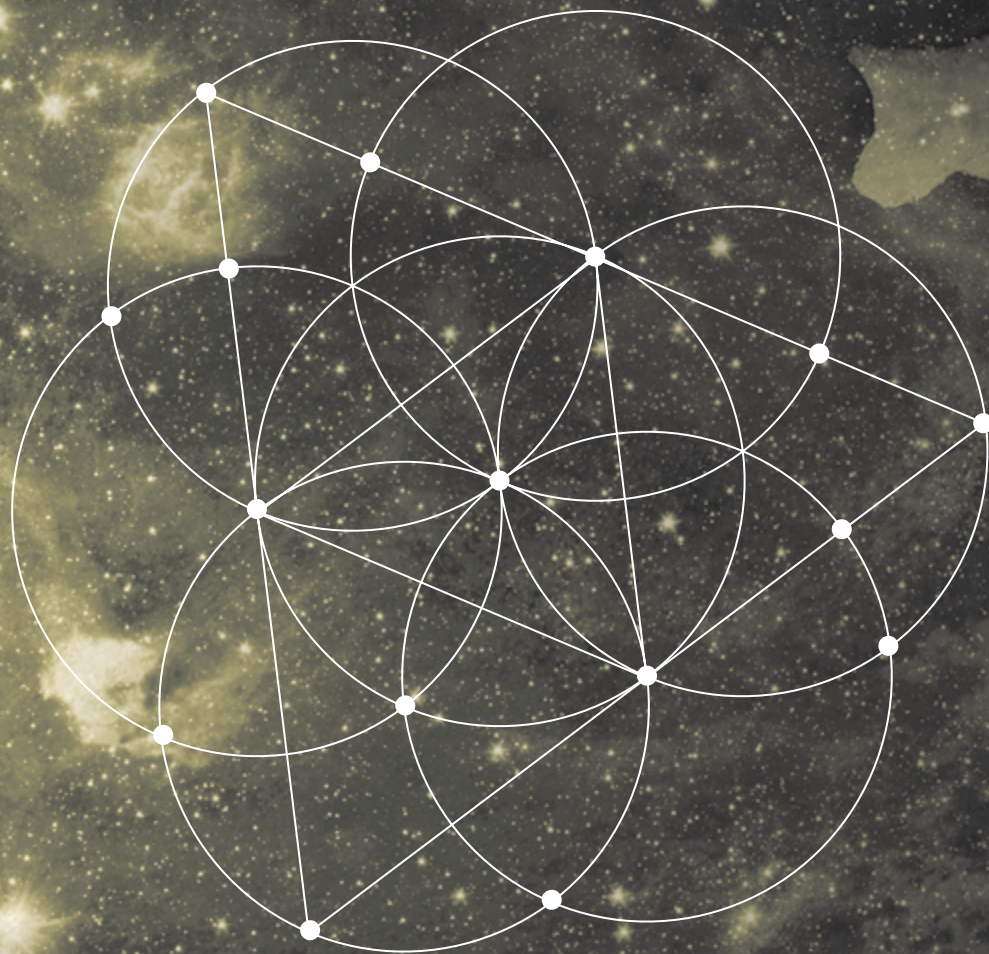


BROADSHEET 16



Real

Real is not how many comments you get from posting a picture of your supper online.
Real is not the make-up case or the surgeon’s knife or that nice waistcoat I sometimes wear.

Real is the dog shit on the sidewalk, the cum stain on your sheet.
Real is the haemorrhoids and the period pain and the unhinged mind and everything else we don’t like to talk about.

Real is feel of a human hand on a human hand.

Real is throwing the first handful of dirt on your mother’s coffin.
Real is the bad blood cells winning.

Real is the beggar and the businessman, the bluebird and the needle tracks, the foetus and the coat hanger.
Real is the child and the Catholic Church.
Real is the schoolyard bully and the satisfied noose.

Real is 70 years old, sad and scared and incontinent.
Real is climbing a ladder towards nothingness.
Real is realising you are climbing a ladder towards nothingness.

Real is 23 bottles of beer, for no good reason, Tuesday night, alone.
Real is ‘I can’t stand my own mind’, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, alone.

Real is what happens to you when you love someone.
Real is what happens to you when they take it away...

Shane Joyce

Weather Report

The hay saved.
A bachelor neighbour
long legs stretched
under the table
the last scrap of bread gone
looks at my mother
his eyes hidden under a slanting cap.
‘Ah, she was only a blow-in’ he says
catches my father’s half-smile
checks himself.
‘I didn’t mean you
Missus. Looks like rain
from the west.’
My mother rising
reaches for the teapot.
‘Sure only for us
You’d have no weather at all.’

Kevin Dowling

A-Maying

In the industrial estate on a site
big enough for a small factory
rough ground is greening.
A pieblad horse, all edgy bones,
scabbed skin patching his dirty hide,
forages scant pasture – only
tiny weeds spread like plankton.
He nudges every leaf longer
than an eyelash
pets them with his nose,
lowers his neck, low,
as low as he can go
until he’s almost on his knees.

That horse will learn – that poor horse.

Máire Ní Lorcáin

Desperate

amid Babel prayers and strangers’ screams
layered in boats on festering seas
lurching over retching waves,
ribs kicked in by smugglers, taking us in.
Scrambling through fetid
forest, everything lost, or stolen.
On a train to Gare de l’Est
the toilet mirror reflects a stranger.
The Qur’an hidden, Charlie Hebdo headline
snatched from a bin –
‘Un Titanic par semaine’.
Look cool like a Frenchman.
Bonjour, oui, non, merci!
I survive to Calais.
No sanctuary, bereft of dignity,
a jungle rat, I squeeze under a trailer.
Not the first, not the last.
In the depth of night
a foghorn delivers our destiny.

Angela Esmonde

Mass Rock

Mid-summer, month of the mead moon,
my brother and I journey by jeep over rock and rut,
the lane dusty from weeks of drought.

Nine months before, the harvest moon,
was my first attempt – a friend and I so near
our destination, not knowing it, turned back.

Now the honeyed scent of summer,
elderflower, furze, ditches laced
with honeysuckle, foxgloves lean and lanky.

The lure of their tiered bells, my fingers
capped in lavender, hands waving
out and about, elegant as a Thai dancer.

Above the gully, silage has stripped
the field bare. I follow the blue and white
check of his shirt, silver waves of his foot soles

on the fleecy green bank, meandering
down among bushes, bramble, stone
to arrive by the water’s edge.

Trees lean in, join branched hands above
Clodiagh stream. From townland to townland people
came here, a sheltered place back-dropped

by Brandon Hill, guarded by spirits in the trees.
The rath nearby lush with cover.
Beneath the skin of recent years

stone smooth as bone, an altar laid bare.
We stand remembering our ancestors – the silence,
the stillness, the stream, too fluent for words.

Nora Brennan

Mother Instead

People are throwing their love through the letterbox.
It falls in white envelopes to the concrete, cold.
I look at them from the stairs
and wish I had my mother instead.

People are passing their love in paper wrapped bouquets.
They smell of her perfume, her skin.
I take them and breathe deep
and wish I had my mother instead.

People are kneeling their love in soft prayers
The rub of beads whisper and sigh –
I hear them spoken as lies
and wish I had my mother instead.

Alice Bennett

Dirty Shirts

I would rather you wore these dirty shirts
for the rest of your life
than watch your tense hands rip collar after collar
in that lonely bathroom
while the whole world collapses around you.

And I would walk with you head held high
for all to see these dirty shirts
if for just one moment the stranger in your head
would leave you and I could be freed
from some of this impossible pain.

But I know you will not stop
and I remember now how your anguished
hands tried to tear from this shirt
the illness it bore as a stain.
Now your stain is mine and I bleed from all this cleaning.

Mary Malin

Sisters by the Red Sea

Ara said one, don't mind him, the seadaire,
he's a bit of a quarehawk. Yerrah,
said another, ná bac that streelish wan,
the Halpins never fed their babies right.
Feck him, that utamálaí! All swagger
and blather and he sent home from Boston in '65.

'65, they sigh. The year Auntie Mary
was cornered in Aqaba by Omar Sharif's
stand-in for the film. Auntie Mellie looks up –
Zhivago? she asks. Arabia, we chorus back.

Mary, nineteen, her streelish Birkin style,
habibti! Sharif, mar dheá, a right fialtach of a man,
His hemline a good yard longer than hers.

Nuala Roche

I See Cat's Paws

-school trip to old Templeorum National School

I am involved in
the immediacy of 1861
the instant that is 1974
as an excited
7 year-old girl traces
her hand across native sandstone
pokes her fingers into its
crevices and exclaims –
'I see cat's paws.'
I am shaken, loosened
from my grown-up concrete
to meander back millions of years,
to the primeval, the Beginning,
when a feline hunted
and stretched on the patch
of earth where my runners pass.

Mary O'Shea

On Warm Summer Days

On warm summer days
scarce enough even in the Sunny Southeast
past dogs crowd in on me
gently tugging me back down the years.

Homer, blow-in lab, more Springfield than Ithaca
but an ill-fated wanderer nevertheless,
no need to talk up that good old boy from Norfolk's linear fields
forever looking eastwards in the morning light.

Bramble, Afro-Celt, pagan sun worshipper
she dreamt of lions and Van Rooyen's stoop
studiously indifferent to my clipped Saxon commands
only the Bean an Tí's soft tones heeded.

Remba, legal alien, golden girl with perfect ridge
at three month's a genetic fluke stilled that huge flawed heart
fresh rosemary on her tongue as she fell
in the gravel garden, a mayfly, best dog we ever had.

Soda, cyclopean scion of Ballygub rescue home,
never the full shilling, bordering on a terrier
complete with oddly marked feet and worrying lumps
Queen of all she half surveyed and 14 years of unyielding love.

All gone now, but still they keep the black dog at bay.

Ray Bolger

Fómhar na nGéanna
ar Oileán Acla, 2015

Grian agus gealach na maidine
ar shról na spéire,
an mhuir agus cósta na mara
go soineanta.

Fonn orm a rá
'gach éinne ar a shuaimhneas,'
ach nílim in ann.
'Sé mo ghuí.

Carmel Cummins

Introduction

The Kilkenny County Council Arts Office is delighted to announce the publication of the sixteenth issue of the very popular Kilkenny Poetry Broadsheet. The aim of the publication is to give local writers a platform for their work. One hundred and six poems were submitted by fifty-five writers for consideration with twelve poems by eleven poets selected.

About the Editor Kimberly Campanello

Kimberly Campanello was born in Elkhart, Indiana, and is a dual American and Irish citizen. Her poetry publications include *Spinning Cities* (Wurm Press, 2011), *Consent* (Doire Press, 2013) and *Imagines* (New Dublin Press, 2015), an Institute of Creative Advertising and Design (ICAD) prizewinner. The Dreadful Press published *Strange Country*, Campanello's full-length collection on the sheela-na-gig stone carvings. Eyewear Publishing released her version of the Sanskrit Tantric text *Hymn to Kālī* (Karpūrādi-stotra) in May 2016. Later this year, zimZalla will publish *MOTHERBABYHOME*, a book of conceptual and visual poetry on the St. Mary's Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, Co. Galway. She is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at York St John University.

Kimberly Campanello Editor's Statement

In its poetic usage, language can link us directly to reality and a transcendence of that reality. Thus, in judging this year's competition I was looking for what Seamus Heaney calls technique, which is: 'a poet's way with words, his management of metre, rhythm and verbal texture; it involves also a definition of his stance toward life, a definition of his own reality. It involves the discovery of ways to go out of his normal cognitive bounds and raid the inarticulate...' I was looking for fresh, concrete word choice, strong imagery, compelling uses of figurative language, attentiveness to sound and visual structure, risk-taking in form and content, and the presence of such technique, which I call poetic vision. I am delighted to present this year's selection of poems, and I wish to thank **Mary Butler**, **Niamh Brophy** and **Julie McGuirk** of Kilkenny Arts Office for their support and **Alé Mercado** for his design.

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